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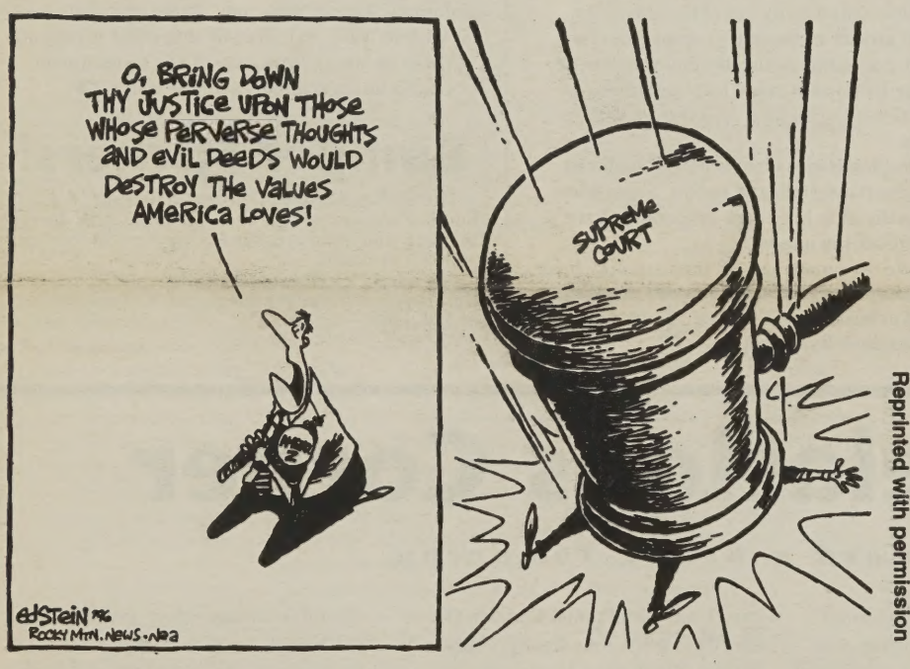
Freedom Watch™

Citizens Project

Amendment 2: The Final Judgment


O, BRING DOWN THY JUSTICE UPON THOSE WHOSE PERVERSE THOUGHTS AND EVIL DEEDS WOULD DESTROY THE VALUES AMERICA LOVES!
SUPREME COURT
EdSTEIN '96
ROCKY MTN. NEWS • NEA

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Turn to page two for more on Amendment 2

It's a Celebration!

Amendment 2 is dead!

In 1991, when Amendment Two was being drafted by Pat Robertson's National Legal Foundation, an NLF staff attorney described the smoke-and-mirrors plan for the voters of Colorado.

"I believe," he wrote, "that 'No Special Privileges' is a good motto for the amendment's public campaign, but I fear the possible legal ramifications if it is included in the amendment itself. The language of the amendment should prohibit homosexuals from claiming *any rights* regarding employment, education, housing or status."

This plan of deception fooled many voters but never fooled the courts. Every court that ruled on Amendment Two found it unconstitutional.

In a stinging rebuke to Colorado for Family Values, the United States Supreme Court decisively struck down Amendment Two. Six Justices (four of them appointed by Republicans) wrote that "the Amendment seems inexplicable by anything but animus toward [gays and lesbians]."

In striking down Amendment Two, the Court laid waste to CFV's carefully-crafted argument that the Amendment was designed to deprive homosexuals of "special rights." The Court noted that the Amendment would allow discrimination "across the board," including discrimination in housing, sale of real estate, health and welfare services, education, employment, insurance, and public accommodations.

In view of this, the Supreme Court noted dryly that it found "nothing special in the protections Amendment Two withholds," because it excludes gays and lesbians from "an almost limitless number of transactions and endeavors that constitute ordinary civic life in a free society."

The Court ended with these words: "We must conclude that Amendment Two classifies homosexuals not to further a proper legislative end but to make them unequal to everyone else. This Colorado cannot do. A State cannot so deem a class of persons a stranger to its laws. Amendment Two violates the Equal Protection Clause, and the judgment of the Supreme Court of Colorado is affirmed."

In short, a conservative Supreme Court has now ruled that Amendment Two was what Citizens Project and other human rights groups said it was – an amendment motivated by hostility or "animus," cloaked in the deceptive language of "special rights," but designed to make gays and lesbians "unequal to everyone else."

Will Perkins can rail against the Supreme Court and call for the impeachment of its justices. But he ought to be looking in the mirror and admitting that truly Christian beliefs could not have begotten such an evil plan. **CP**

– *Greg Walta*

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More on Amendment 2

CFV's Reaction

Colorado for Family Values responded to the Supreme Court's decision by calling for the impeachment of "some of the justices," and by promising its supporters that "today is not the end, but in fact the beginning."

An unhappy Will Perkins promised that CFV would continue to fight and kept open the possibility that they would draft another anti-gay amendment, a "son of Amendment 2." "Amendment 2 has never been an issue against people," stated Perkins. "It has never been motivated by hate."

At CFV's press conference, Will Perkins presented himself as a defender of America's civil rights. According to Will, among those who should be "chilled" or "have much to fear" as a result of the Court's ruling were:

- those who believe in neutrality,
- those who believe in "live and let live," and
- America's ethnic minorities.

Perkins also said that CFV might promote a bill for the next Colorado legislature that would limit gay rights. In the past, Perkins has expressed interest in Amendment 2-type language that would not mention homosexuals by name, but instead would prohibit future protection from discrimination for everyone not currently protected by law against discrimination.

Focus on the Family, which had strongly backed *Amendment 2, also expressed disappointment at the* Supreme Court's ruling. The decision, a Focus spokesman said, was "a defeat for freedom of conscience." **CP**

Costs & Benefits

How much tax money did Colorado spend to pursue the Amendment 2 issue through the courts? The final tab on the state side has reached $420,000.

The attorneys who successfully opposed Amendment 2 will shortly ask the court to order the state to pay their legal expenses as well. If the court agrees, the cost to taxpayers could be over $800,000.

That doesn't count the cost of canceled conventions and lost business during the pendency of Amendment 2. Nor does it count the financial and emotional cost to both sides.

What about the benefits? CFV's successful campaign achieved spectacular results. Thanks to CFV's activism, America now has the strongest legal defense against those who would diminish the rights of gays and lesbians.

CFV helped push many in the Colorado Springs gay and lesbian community out of the closet, the beginning of greater community acceptance. The Amendment 2 decision vindicates that movement.

Prodded by CFV's campaign, local progressive straights coalesced in support of community gays and lesbians.

Gay and lesbian issues have achieved high visibility throughout our state and nation. Many who were once inclined to knee-jerk intolerance have begun to re-think the issues.

In short, we owe more to CFV than we may have realized. Perhaps the next time you or I see Will Perkins or Kevin Tebedo, a simple "thank you" would be wonderfully appropriate. **CP**

Looking Ahead

The Amendment 2 battle was ugly and bruising. However, in its wake came a revitalized and visible gay and lesbian community and a steady growth of progressive political and artistic voices.

Citizens Project enjoyes continuing support. Ground Zero, *The Independent*, Smokebrush, Food for Thought, and the Human Relations Coalition have become fixtures in our community. The *Gazette Telegraph* has made strides toward becoming a more positive force in the community. Things may be getting better.

The intolerance of many in the "family values" crowd continues. Militia and patriot movements flourish more openly in our region. We can expect all these groups to continue to be visible and vocal on many fronts, in many issues.

But now there are more reasonable voices in our community saying "time out." There are roads we do not wish to walk, and more of us are just saying no.

Where do we go from here? Let's be optimistic, let's build bridges, and let's not be naive. **CP**

Bumper Stickers!

The blue and white "Celebrate Diversity" bumper stickers helped keep our hope alive during the long Amendment 2 battle. They're still relevant and still available.

For a free "Celebrate Diversity" or "Create Community" bumper sticker, call Citizens Project at 520-9899.

Human Relations Corner

Working Toward a Better Tomorrow

The Pikes Peak Human Relations Coalition will complete our board development process in June. With a strong and cohesive board in place, we can get on with the work of establishing our task committees and get down to business.

We invite you to publicly express your support for PPHRC. Please fill out and return this endorsement form today. Then call us at 634-1525 to find more about how you can help promote positive human relations in our community!

*****

Who supports the Human Relations Coalition? All Souls Unitarian Church, Black Chamber of Commerce, Black Coalition of Concerned Citizens, Calvary United Methodist Church, Century 21 Cornerstone Realty, Citizens Project, The Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce, Community Universalists, CS Education Association, Democratic Women's Club, DIGNITY/Southern CO, *Downtown Today*, Education and Health Services, First Choice Printing Co, Gill Foundation, Ground Zero, Housing Advocacy Coalition, *Independent*, Jewish Voices for Justice, Kadesia Temple #135, Little Richard's Toy Store, Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Celebration Committee, Micro Systems and Design, NAACP, NOW, Payne Chapel AME Church, Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center, Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Commission, Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church, Pegasus Learning Company, People's United Methodist Church, The P.M. Wynn Gospel Revue Program, Poor Richard's Restaurant and Bookstore, Regional Prevention Center, Rocky Mountain United Chavurot, Simple Justice, Southern CO Women's Chamber of Commerce, *Springs Magazine*, Structure Systems, Ltd., Symbios Logic, Inc., Temple Beit Torah, 3RI, Unity Church of the Rockies, and Urban League. **CP**

Join Us in Endorsing This Worthy Project!

Please return to:

Pikes Peak Human Relations Coalition, Box 554, Colorado Springs, CO 80901.

(719) 634-1525

Endorsement of PPHRC

I/We endorse and support the Pikes Peak Human Relations Coalition.

Organization: _____

Individual: _____

This endorsement is for an:
___ Organization
___ Individual
___ Both

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

A Truly Grand Deception

Colorado Springs Hosts Constitutional Forum

by Madeline Jenkins Millard

The title was "The Grand Deception in America." But who was being deceived, and by whom, was open to interpretation when God's Glory Ministries held a two-day meeting on the U.S. Constitution in El Paso County's Centennial Hall March 29-30.

Who was being deceived, and by whom, was open to interpretation.

Featured speakers included Colorado Senator Charles Duke, militia activist Eugene Schroder, and conspiratorial theorist Ralph Epperson. Their common topic was our Constitution, but their viewpoints sometimes disagreed.

Their talks reflected the views of the many constitutionalists, freemen, patriots, and militia-types in the audience. Government as enemy was a common theme from podium and participants alike.

"Plain old Americans"

Senator Duke's keynote speech called for a return to the Constitution he believes in. For him, the destruction of the Constitution began in the "grand deception" of 1933 when Congress granted President Franklin Roosevelt extraordinary powers to fight the Great Depression.

Senator Duke, now a Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate, argued that we must repeal this 1933 federal legislation in order to regain the constitutional balance of powers and its benefits. "All over this country, the people are demanding that we have our Constitution back," he said. "I think it's the solution to our health and welfare problems....I think it's the solution to our education problems."

"Because the word 'education' doesn't appear in the Constitution," Duke went on, "that's why the federal Department of Education has to be abolished."

Senator Duke was careful not to encourage the more extreme elements in the auditorium. When Duke mentioned his upcoming hearings on constitutional issues for the Colorado Senate, one member of the audience suggested that everyone who went should wear a Colorado Militia T-shirt. Duke responded, "It's not a bad idea, but we know what the media would do with that; they would turn it around and use it against us."

Rather than emphasizing a militia identity, Duke suggested that a better characterization would be "just plain old Americans."

The imperial presidency

According to speaker Eugene Schroder, the 1933 legislation placed the President of the United States above the Constitution. Because this congressional grant of tremendous power to the president has never been repealed, said Schroder, "it has put our people and our children into absolute bondage."

And how to escape this slavery? Like Duke, Schroder advocates repealing the 1933 act. But Schroder's vision to restore America may have gone beyond simple legislative activism at times.

Self-proclaimed "sovereign" Linda Tebedo called Schroder "My hero, the American hero."

Schroder, of Campo, Colorado, has been investigated for teaching bomb-making seminars to movement sympathizers on southeastern Colorado farms. According to the Coalition for Human Dignity, Schroder was actively involved with the racist, anti-Semitic and violent Posse Comitatus in the 1980s.

Yet he remains a leader of disaffected right-wingers. Self-proclaimed "sovereign" Linda Tebedo called Schroder "My hero, the American hero."

Blame the Founding Fathers

Ralph Epperson, the weekend's principal speaker, championed history as conspiracy. As he said, "Historic events occur by design for reasons that are not generally made known to the people."

He had a unique take on the Constitution. According to Epperson, the U.S. Constitution "is the most oppressive document ever written by the mind of man." When the Constitution established the District of Columbia, the Founding Fathers – who were all Freemasons – thereby committed the crime "they knew would later destroy it [the Constitution]."

The U.S. Constitution is the most oppressive document ever written by the mind of man.

What was that crime? Epperson believes that by giving Congress authority over the District of Columbia (in Article I, Section 8), the Founding Fathers "created two separate governments, and [they] gave one of those governments absolute tyrannical power."

The remainder of the Constitution was a cover-up. "They had to build a front to conceal their crime; they had to build an elaborate facade so that anyone who read the Constitution would see that power being divided but not the power being centralized."

He believes that the expansion of this centralization of political power, which the Founding Fathers started in the District of Columbia and Congress enhanced by its 1933 legislation, must be reversed lest it destroy America.

Or blame the Masons

Epperson blames secret societies for the world's evils: wars, famines, depression and such. "I am a historian, and this is history," he said. "No other historian has found [this material]." He identifies Freemasonry as the arch-villain secret society.

The symbols and numbers Epperson says are integral to Freemasonry prove its sinister intent throughout history. For him the number 13 (and multiples of it) brand almost anything containing those numbers as related to the evil Masonic order.

He gave this memorable example. "If you multiply the number 13 by itself you get 169. If you add the traditional founding of this nation in 1607...and 169 you get 1776. ...Now, if you add 169 to 1776...you get the year 1945, the year that Harry Truman, a 32nd degree Mason, dropped atomic bombs on the Christians in Japan. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the two sites of the highest concentration of Christians in Japan."

"And four months after Harry Truman killed the Christians," Epperson whispered, "he was promoted to the 33rd degree. Do you understand? They're out to destroy Christianity!"

The New World Order

Epperson predicted the future. Look at the pyramid on the Great Seal, he said. "Notice the eye of the pyramid is above the pyramid and not on it. And some day that eye will land on the pyramid, and that day is known...when the capping takes place on January the first of the year 2000, the New World Order will start."

On that date, according to Epperson, Lucifer will appear on the top of that pyramid, greeted by "George Bush and thousands of others." Lucifer is going to take occupancy of the pyramid, and "that is why [the Founding Fathers] chose to commit this nation to the New World Order. They knew that this program was the program of Lucifer." "They knew," he whispers to his audience of 100.

On January the first of the year 2000, the New World Order will start.

Is he right?

Lest any should brand him a crackpot, Epperson was clear: "I don't make statements I can't prove. You won't find me making wild outlandish statements."

Even President Clinton, he said, agrees that history is conspiracy. "Bill Clinton told the American people on national television there was a conspiracy. It kills people. It plans wars. It creates depressions. It controls both the Democrats and the Republicans, and it controls Communism."

While his audience showed little interest in disputing him, a later check of Epperson's stated sources failed to reveal President Clinton's enthusiasm for historical conspiracy theory.

God and guns

Was the entire meeting a conspiracy? God's Glory Ministries seemed an odd host for a meeting of constitutionalists, superpatriots and militia-types. While political fundamentalism and religious fundamentalism often support each other, God and guns do not often mix so explicitly at a local level.

No one knew anything about the ministry. Citizens Project had never heard of it. Chuck Gosnell of our local Christian Coalition couldn't place it. A further search turned up nothing on either ministry or minister.

Rachel Riggs, who made the reservations for the event, had claimed not only to represent *God's Glory Ministries, but also* the Constitution Party (which no longer exists in Colorado) and the Colorado Freedom Coalition. But the phone number on the flyer advertising the meeting was out of service.

Bob Bagley of the Colorado Firearms Coalition confirmed that Rachel Riggs, an ordained minister, was the leader of God's Glory Ministry. However, he said, there was no mystery–she simply moved back to her home town in Michigan immediately after the forum.

Local participants

Besides the "plain old Americans" who came to hear the speakers, a number of more prominent local individuals and organizations appeared in person or through their campaign literature. These included candidates for El Paso County commissioner Betty Beedy and Jeri Howells; Colorado Senator Ray Powers; the soon-to-be-jailed Linda Tebedo; Americans for Constitutional Action, the John Birch Society, TRIM (Tax Reform Immediately), Gun Owners of America, and the Colorado Firearms Coalition. **CP**

Inside CP

CP on the air

CP Board member **Greg Walta** and staffer **Megan Day** will be guests on Chuck Baker's *On The Carpet* radio show starting at 1:00 p.m. June 12. Chuck's heavily conservative show broadcasts on KVOR 1300 on your AM dial. It's a call-in program, and you are welcome to call 636-1300 or 527-1300 with questions or comments.

CP in the news

The big news was Amendment 2. Board members Greg Walta and **Richard Skorman** were quoted on many local TV and radio news programs when the Amendment 2 decision was released May 20. They expressed our relief and encouraged the community to mend, while remaining vigilant against similar future efforts.

On May 7, the *Gazette Telegraph* ran a Forum piece by CP Board member **Jody Alyn** about the Parental Rights Amendment. Her concerns: the PRA would challenge existing law protecting abused children and would threaten public school educational policies.

The Japanese Public Television interviewed CP staffer Megan Day for their series on hate radio in America.

The *Houston Chronicle* contacted us for information about the upcoming Cornerstone Baptist Church trial. As covered in past *Freedom Watch* issues, the church is being sued by angry parents for luring children to a church carnival and then baptizing them without the consent of the parents.

Parental rights

Heard about the Parental Rights Amendment coming up on the November ballot? Concerned that it might protect child abusers? Want to learn more? Well, join us on the Parental Rights Task Force to research, write and speak about the deceptive Parental Rights Amendment. Call us at the office at 520-9899 if you're interested.

Be green

A green "thumbs up" to **John Hill** for coordinating Citizens Project's Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Median projects. We have adopted the Wahsatch median from Uintah to the Bon Shopping Center. Now we are proud to announce our new arrival, the Shooks Run Trail from Cache La Poudre to Willamette.

If you would like to help create community by keeping our parks clean, stop by the park or median to pick up litter whenever you get a chance.

Thank you volunteers

We want to extend a special thank you to **Cynthia Berger** and **Rick Taylor** for all their help over the past few months. We wish them well in their new adventures in Kansas City. **CP**

Announcements

Love makes a family

The national traveling photo exhibit "Love Makes a Family–Portraits of Lesbian and Gay Families" is coming to Colorado Springs. The exhibit will be at Poor Richard's Restaurant June 1 through June 15. There will be a reception at Poor Richard's 3-6 p.m. Sunday June 2. Stop by and see the families that cause such fear in Colorado for Family Values.

Pride parade

The annual gay pride parade will be held Sunday, June 16. Beginning at 1:00 p.m. (starting to line-up earlier) on the corner of Tejon and Cache La Poudre, the parade will progress down Tejon to Acacia Park.

Much to celebrate – much pride this year! Join the merriment planned throughout the afternoon. Meet us under the CP banner at the start of the parade.

Ballot Initiatives forum

The Democratic Women's Club will sponsor a public forum on the Campaign Finance Reform and the Non-profit Tax ballot initiatives. Speakers include Rick Bainter of Common Cause and local author/lawyer John Murphy, the force behind the Non-profit Tax initiative. This free forum will be held June 19 at 7:00 p.m. in the East Library (5550 N. Union). You'all are invited to attend.

Teaching tolerance

The Anti-Defamation League will recognize Katheryn Anderson, a Carmel Middle School teacher, as one of only two statewide recipients of their World of Difference Teacher Recognition Award in a May 30 ceremony in Denver. The award recognizes teachers who have developed exemplary programs to combat racism and promote respect for diversity in the classroom.

Please drop a note to Citizens Project if you have an announcement we should run. Our deadline is the 10th of each month.

You've read Freedom Watch...
You've liked what you've seen...

Now we need your support.

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Your voice for tolerance in the Pikes Peak region.

Citizens Project ...

- Reports on news and views in *Freedom Watch*
- Organizes campaigns, workshops and events
- Sponsors Candidate Surveys and Forums
- Monitors and informs on legislative and other issues

... and more

❑ Yes, I'd like to join Citizens Project! Enclosed is my membership contribution ($20 minimum.)

❑ I'm already a member, but I would like to do more! Enclosed is my contribution of:

❑ $20 ❑ $35 ❑ $50 ❑ $120 ❑ Other: $_____

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The Push for Creationism

It's time to pay attention

Can you name two recurring religious right issues involving public schools? If you said school prayer and teaching creationism in public schools, you were right on the button.

Each provides a means for a religion to use government (in this case, public schools) to impose its doctrines and practices on others. Each is justified as necessary to prevent immorality in, and the moral collapse of, our society.

While prayer in public schools is in a holding pattern (waiting for Congress to act on a constitutional amendment), the push for creationism in public schools continues unabated.

What's the problem? Some people want public school teachers to teach biblical beliefs about the creation of the world, along with (and sometimes to the exclusion of) the standard scientific evidence of evolution.

"God created the earth in seven days, about 10,000 years ago" – that's one conservative Christian version of creation. Others simply want schools not to teach anything about the theory and evidence of evolution.

Colorado Springs has become a center for public school creationists. Focus on the Family and Summit Ministries want creationism (sometimes renamed "intelligent theory of design") to be taught on an equal basis with evolution. And they are having an effect.

Just a few years ago, some science teachers at Rampart High School decided not to teach their students anything about evolution in science classes. After much publicity, the school administration reversed that decision. Other science teachers have been encouraged by students and parents to eliminate evolution from the science curriculum, sometimes in favor of teaching only creationism.

These changes have attracted the interest of some of us at Citizens Project. We now have a "Creationist Group" which meets to study the issue and monitor the situation. Among other things, we are preparing a response booklet to deal with arguments for teaching creationism in our public schools

We invite your help. You or your children may have information about teachers promoting creationism in public schools or failing to teach evolution at appropriate times in science classes. If so, we would like to hear from you.

Please give Citizens Project a call at 520-9899, or call Doug Triggs at 634-2836. **CP**

Our Mission: Citizens Project is a grassroots organization in the Pikes Peak region dedicated to upholding the traditional American values of pluralism, freedom of religion and separation of church and state.

Citizens Project

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